

Case Study: Paper Waste Prevention

Port of Seattle

February, 2005

Overview

- ◆ The Port of Seattle has about 1800 employees plus contractors and about 2000 customers.

Technology strategies

- ◆ The Port of Seattle has focused on implementing an Electronic Document Management (EDMS) system. While their impetus has been saving money and improving efficiency, a reduction in paper use has resulted from some of their strategies.
- ◆ The Port uses Peoplesoft financial management software. The Hummingbird EDMS system is an add-on to the financial system that allows accounts payable vouchers to be electronically imaged and stored on their system. An upgrade is being done to the web version of the software which will allow vendor's invoices to be scanned directly to a webpage to be viewed and completed for payment. The only paper used is the original invoice from the vendors. When the system is completely operational, they may be able to destroy and eliminate the need to store the original vendor invoices and rely completely on the electronic image. Since all payables will be able to be viewed on-line, better purchasing and payment decisions will be able to be made. Currently 300,000 paper copies of vendor invoices are made, and all of these will be eliminated, resulting in savings of \$8000/year simply on vendor invoices. In addition, other documents will be eliminated in the future such as the Voucher Reports and the payment approval forms.
- ◆ Lease agreements with tenants can also be scanned on-line, which saves some paper, but mainly eliminates staff time and handling.
- ◆ Another technology the Port is using to increase efficiency is the E Bid System. This system allows the bidding process to occur on-line. Engineering specs and drawings are routed electronically and revision levels are kept current through a live link. The printing of many paper copies of project plans are avoided, there is better version control and project partners are up to date resulting in a win-win-win situation.

Reducing the number of Printers

- ◆ The Port is also working towards retiring personal printers. An internal study showed that the proliferation of personal printers was very expensive in terms of toner, maintenance and paper. In a couple of departments, the director explained the potential savings to the employees and asked for voluntary participation in retiring printers. This method has worked well in reducing the quantity of elective documents printed, however it has not been extended to the rest of the organization as of yet.